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C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 001639

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: QATAR SEEKS USG SUPPORT FOR PARAGUAY TO HOST NEXT
DEMOCRACIES CONFERENCE

REF: DOHA 1603

Derived from: DSCG 05-1, B,D

¶1. (C) Mohamed al-Rumaihy, Assistant to the Minister for Follow-Up Affairs at the Qatari MFA and Qatar's chief organizer for the Sixth International Conference for New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD - see reftel), asked Ambassador November 8 for USG assistance in raising funds for Paraguay to host the Seventh ICNRD. He said Qatar urgently wanted to avert a bid by Venezuela later this year to take over ICNRD when Qatar's term ends in three years. Paraguay is the appropriate Latin American candidate, he said, and Qatar would try to speed the process and get a decision in December ¶2006.

¶2. (C) Rumaihy said that Paraguay, a poor country, must show that it can obtain necessary funding to host the conference, including building or renovating appropriate facilities. He said the country will need USD 3-5 million to host the next conference. Qatar would contribute USD 100,000 and he asked that the USG contribute through USAID to infrastructure projects related to the conference and encourage companies like Ford to make in-kind contributions. Al-Rumaihy asked the Ambassador to pass his request to Washington and seek a response within two weeks.

¶3. (C) Rumaihy also said he appreciated the Ambassador's statement (passed separately to IO) issued after the conclusion of ICNRD and printed in several local newspapers. (The statement expressed appreciation for Qatar's commitment to democratization as host of the ICNRD but noted our reservations about inclusion of a number of non-democracies in the organization and about language critical of Israel in the final declaration.) Rumaihy said that Qatar did not support some of the Palestinian delegation's harsher proposed language but that it was necessary to compromise in the drafting committee.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Qatar is concerned that if action is not taken quickly to nail down Paraguay as the next host, Venezuela will step in to fill the vacuum and the ICNRD process in which Qatar has invested so much time and money will be discredited. Post requests guidance on responding to the Qatari request.
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